

(Revival) Revival Sets Things Right - Part 2

by Michael L. Brown

Revival brings Jesus back to his central role, restores the fear of the Lord, and brings a revelation of heaven and hell, leading to a change in society and the world.

Duration: 35:12

Scripture: Exodus 20:18, Matthew 5:13-16, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Revival", "Evangelism"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker highlights the current state of believers in the United States, noting that there are more believers now than ever before. However, despite the abundance of churches, ministries, and Christian media, society is crumbling and the fear of God is disappearing. The speaker emphasizes the importance of believers being the salt of the earth and the light of the world, living in a way that glorifies God and convicts others of their sin. The sermon also discusses the need for believers to constantly remind themselves that they are only passing through this world and that others are lost without God.

Transcript

Revival brings Jesus back to his central role. Revival brings us a fresh revelation of the character of God. If there's anything we're lacking in the body this day, it's the fear of the Lord.

It's this recognition of who He is and it's a life lived out before Him. You do a study, just take the words fear of the Lord, fear of God, go through the Hebrew Scriptures, you'll be amazed. You'll be absolutely amazed.

It talks about a whole lifestyle that's lived before Him. It begins with that recognition. Turn with me to Exodus 20.

The recognition of who God is. And then in light of that, it deals with how we live before Him, having recognized who He is. And then it deals with the protection and security that one has walking in the fear of the Lord.

I can't get into it now, it's a wonderful subject, but just run references. Go through the Scriptures and run references and you'll see. In Exodus the 20th chapter, verse 18, when the people saw the thunder and lightning and heard the trumpet and saw the mountain and smoke, they trembled with fear.

They stayed at a distance and said to Moses, speak to us yourself and we will listen, but do not have God speak to us or we will die. Moses said to the people, do not fear. The NIV says do not be afraid.

It's seeking to bring out the sense. That's fine, but the Hebrew is simply do not fear. God has come to test you so that His fear will be before you to keep you from sinning.

Isn't that strange? Don't fear. God's come so that His fear will be before you. Don't fear.

That's why the NIV says don't be afraid. Look, don't panic. He's not going to slaughter you.

He's not going to wipe you out right now. But fear. Recognize who He is.

Never ever forget this day and you'll live differently. The simplest way I can explain it is it's almost like you look up and you see the bright light of God and that light comes down and shines a path around us and we walk within that path because we recognize who He is. We walk moment by moment in His light and in that place is total security.

The man who fears God fears nothing else. The man who fears everything else obviously doesn't know the fear of the Lord. So in revival there is that recovery of the holiness of God and with that the fear of the Lord which tends to life, the fear of the Lord which is the beginning of wisdom, the fear of the Lord which keeps us from sin.

Another thing that is restored, brought back to the body is a revelation of heaven and hell. A revelation of heaven and hell. Someone preached a message recently at Beth Messiah basically about not having treasures in this earth, about living in light of eternity.

And I just preached a very similar message to that in New York called Put Away Your Idols. And I talked about when I was over in Kenya I was sharing with a missionary couple from Canada and I said there's a sense where I envy you. Because here they were, a white family in a black country.

Here they were there for one purpose only which was to win people to the Lord. They couldn't fall asleep in the world. They couldn't become complacent in the world.

They couldn't get caught up in earthly treasures because they were totally away from everything that was common to them. Everything they were used to for one purpose and one purpose only, to win people to the Lord. And I said there's a sense in which I really envy you guys.

Because where I am, you've got to constantly remind yourself. In the United States and in Montgomery County and in the affluent lifestyles that most of us are around, you've got to constantly remind yourself that you're only passing through. You say, well, I'm aware of that, Mike.

But you've got to constantly remind yourself that everybody else around you is passing through. You say, well, I'm aware of that too. Well, you've got to remind yourself that they're lost forever without God.

And we don't believe that. Well, we believe it mentally. We give a cent, but in our hearts, motivating, acting, activating us, we don't.

What am I saying? This is a biblical truth that has largely been lost to us in this generation. The reality of heaven and hell, the reality of eternity, the fact that we are only passing through. Yes, God is concerned with this world.

He is concerned with this life. This is the arena where everything happens. He's concerned with healing and blessing and meeting our needs.

Absolutely, definitely yes. For his glory and because he loves us and so that we can help other people. He's concerned with those things.

But the fact of the matter is. In revival, many times people are given a vision of hell. Evan Roberts, who had prayed for revival in Wales for 12 or 13 years on a regular basis, was given such an overwhelming vision of hell.

It brought on such deep travail on him. The last year before the Welsh revival in 1904, the travail was so heavy on him. It was reported that his landlady kicked him out because she couldn't take all of his groaning.

People are seized. All of a sudden they see something. I remember the pastor of the church I was saved in.

He used to be a nightclub entertainer and he got saved and led several of his brothers to the Lord subsequently. But he was reading Luke 16 and he saw the reality of hell and being lost forever. It jumped off the page and he ran to the bar was brother brother was.

He said, man, this is real. This is real. In revival, people see it.

The blinders are taken off. After after the message was preached and Beth Messiah about living in light of eternity. I said to some of the brothers, I said, you know, it's a real good message.

I said, but there's nothing we could do. I said, we're more than we're 90 percent wrong and 10 percent right. Our hearts are so far off that all the repenting in the world at that altar is only going to get us an inch closer.

We've got miles to go. All we can do is seek God every day and just wait for him to break through and break us out. You know what I'm saying? It's like it's like so far beyond us to really catch hold of that vision, that reality.

Maybe every so often it grips us that it really takes a revival. It really takes God bringing things back in and then we see it. Richard Wurmbrand said that that in the persecuted church, they can't understand how we Western believers don't try and win everyone we know to the Lord.

I mean, it's so clear to them that people are saved or lost. It's so clear when you have somebody spit in your face, when you have somebody fire you from their job, from the job you work, when you have somebody burn your house down, when you have somebody throw you in jail, when you have somebody torture you, you recognize very clearly that these people need Jesus, that Yeshua died for them, that their sins are everywhere and they need to be forgiven. So revival will bring back the revelation of the reality of hell.

Just a simple question to ask yourself, when's the last time you wept for someone who was unsafe? Or are you more upset over your home team losing in a sport than over someone going to hell? Or are you more concerned when a piece of furniture is damaged than when someone doesn't hear the gospel? I mean, you make the application in your own mind, you come up with the analogy that fits, but that's reality.

And I've asked God for a revelation of eternity, a revelation of heaven and hell to the extent that I could bear it, because if he gave a full revelation, that'd be it. That'd be the last prayer that was ever answered because we'd collapse.

We'd be dead as soon as we saw it, glimpsed it. I prayed for an understanding of his justice, how it could be so. But you see, our gospel has become so man centered and it's such an unjustifiable position to the human mind that someone could be lost forever or suffer forever.

That basically we've rationalized everything away, although we still know it's in the word and we still know it's true and we'll violently disagree with anyone who says it's not true, that eternal punishment is not what the scriptures teach. In terms of our actual practice and orientation and lifestyle, it's really just a doctrine that we mentally assent to. I was writing the answer to a question in some new notes for Sid Roth on why did God allow six million Jews to die in the Holocaust.

And you could say why did he allow 11 million to die in general, but here this is specifically for Jewish people. And the more I tried to be sensitive to the question, the deeper the hole I dug for myself. In other words, the more I tried to empathize with the heart that could ask that an incredible suffering and cruelty and barbarism that took place, the more I went down with that, the harder it was for me to give an answer.

I was almost making excuses for God. And in the midst of this, God just reminded me, look, he's not guilty. He's not to blame.

He never does anything wrong. We don't have to justify him. Our whole thing, we try and justify God in our teaching and show people why what God really does is OK and it's acceptable and he really is a good God to our way of thinking, etc.

We're trying to prove that to people instead of saying, listen, God commands you to repent. God commands all men everywhere to repent. That's a basic thing.

He has the right to because he's God, because we've sinned against him and he's angry. Well, that revelation of eternity comes from the revelation of who God is. It comes from the revelation of what Jesus accomplished, the greatness of the sacrifice.

It all then flows out naturally into eternal issues. You see, there's a flip side of restoration of truth here, which is the revelation of the reality of heaven will loose us from attachment to earthly things. It will loose us from our hyper affection for things that are going to pass away.

It'll cause us to realize that we're pilgrims and strangers because we've got a better lasting hope. It's a funny thing, but wherever I live, I've always had the feeling. Well, let me let me interrupt and say this.

I've got a specific time frame from the Lord, barring something unexpected in terms of what he's called us to do here in Maryland, how long we're to be here for. OK, so I have a certain sense of slight permanence, whether it's two years or six or eight or ten, whatever God said to me. The fact is, there's that slight sense.

But everywhere I could remember living for years, there was always that sense. I wonder how long we'll be here. And I never could feel totally at home no matter where it was.

I said, well, that's because it's on planet Earth. We moved into our house. It was six months late in being built.

We stayed in someone's basement up to that point until it was ready. We moved in. And I actually had to walk around the house after the first few days and remind myself, be thankful because there is something set in me, a recognition of the fact that we're just passing through.

And I am thankful and I do appreciate it. But we're just passing through. What am I saying? Well, that's that's part of it.

That's healthy. That's good when our attitudes are like that. But the fact is, there's very little revelation of heaven.

I mean, I recognize we're passing through. I recognize we're in a war. I recognize we're called to serve.

But there's very little excitement about heaven. I talked to a word of faith pastor and he went to a church that was kind of half dead church. And he was kind of judging them a little bit as he looked around and they were singing a song about heaven.

And the spirit started to convict him and said, they've got more of the hope of heaven than you do. You so much put your faith in this earth and the blessing of God for here and now and today. And most of us, if we're honest, live for the blessing of God today because we haven't suffered.

God just made it clear. You've lost the hope of heaven. You've lost the reality of what God calls in you to really sacrifice.

You've got to have that. You've got to have that reality. How could someone be a martyr unless there is the reality of heaven? So in revival, as things are set right, there's a new revelation of heaven that just causes people to get freed up from so many fleshly, worldly, earthly concerns and gives them a vision of life to come.

Gives them a vision of what it'd be like to be in the presence of God without sin, without the devil, without the flesh. With absolute overflowing joy, our portion for him. And another thing that revival restores is in general.

In general, it brings believers back to living a biblical lifestyle, living by faith. Being giving sacrificial people. Having a heart, one for another, walking in love.

In other words, we live as if the Bible were really true. I know it may sound crass and you may be insulted by me saying that we don't live as if the Bible were really true, but you examine yourself and you see where you come up on that on that scorecard. I know where I come up, at least.

But in revival, as things are restored. Yeah, of course, I just love these people. Sure, I'll just give and help.

Sure, I'll lay down my life. I'd love to. Sure, I'm free from this concern.

Sure, I've overcome this sin because I'm living as if the word is really true. You say, man, it sounds like revival really helps. Fact is, it's been observed that America has been without a true revival for a very long time now.

We have not had, you've had the Azusa Street outpouring and that was a great revival, but it was of a different dimension. It was of a dimension of restoring the power of the spirit for ministry and witness. In terms of the dimension of an overall recovery of New Testament truth, that wasn't a primary thing that it

was doing.

It was it was bringing us in terms of an end time restoration, bringing us into something that God had promised long ago. But in terms of in terms of some of the other aspects of revival that we've talked about, it didn't bring all of them about. Sure, Jesus was central.

Sure, the fear of God was there. Sure, people got revelation of heaven and hell. But the main emphasis that spread from Azusa was a little bit different.

If you look at our country, we've really been without a revival for over 100 years. You really look at it, really considered some of the ones that we're describing and speaking about, and that's why the country's in the situation that it's in. There's a book that Mary Stewart Ralphie wrote called The Cure of All Ills.

And she says in the back, she's got this letter, I have found it. In 1978, I undertook a survey of the great revivals of the church age. A decade of study unveiled the priceless truth, which has been like a fire shut up in my bones that I couldn't contain.

Namely, that only in times of mighty revival does the Holy Spirit act as yeast and strike through the whole lump of society's dough in a flash and in one leavening solve moral, social and political problems. In other words, she's saying the answer is revival. I mean, reduce everything to a fundamental truth.

And what's the answer? The answer is revival. She says just on the back of her book here, discover how you alone individual can become a son of thunder, reshape human landscape and change the destiny of this generation. Time and again, ordinary people cause moral earthquakes, revivals of religion that suddenly transform the character of nations, prevent it wars, stabilize society, empty jails, idle police, laid-off judges, bankrupted breweries, closed theaters, converted atheists, nearly eliminated drunkenness, crime and gambling, restored purity to the church, virtue to government, integrity to commerce.

Discover when Atlantic City's entire population was saved. Denver shut down for prayer. Average churches of 120 grew to 1,400 in one and a half years.

Portland's merchants closed three hours each midday for prayer. Well, that's what revival does. That's what revival does.

When we were in Mombasa, one intercessor was sharing with us the dynamic prayer meetings that take place in City Hall in Nairobi, the place packed out, people praying. Someone told me they visited tremendous dynamic times in God. We haven't glimpsed it again.

As I taught early on in these classes about major characteristics of revival, it was just to show us we've never experienced one in our society. As revival sets things right, it will have the effect of setting things right in the world, as we just saw. There will be that return to biblical morality.

Why? Because of the influence of the people of God. We mentioned earlier, but I'll just say it again. One reason will be because a lot of people get saved.

And when crime kingpins and drug kingpins and the customers of sin all get saved, well, crime goes down, sin goes down, morality goes up. What would happen if some of our media heads got born again? What would happen if some of our leading newspaper people got born again? I mean, you'd have a change in the whole mindset of our society. And then the fear of God comes back.

Why? Because the people of God become the salt and light of the earth. Because the people of God hold up a standard of righteousness. Because the people of God show forth what God is really talking about by living godly, moral lives.

Look over in 2 Peter, the second chapter. By the way, not just godly, moral lives, but lives that are actively going out, touching the world, not just self-centered, trying to feed me, me, me, but lives that are reaching out, lives that are confronting with the gospel. When you get a revelation of hell, you better believe you preach the gospel with a lot more fervor and a lot more sacrificially and to a lot more people.

Look at what it says. Make it a 1 Peter, chapter two. He says in verse eleven, Dear friends, I urge you as aliens and strangers in the world to abstain from sinful desires which war against your soul.

Live such godly lives among the pagans that though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us. He's talking about pagans seeing the lives of believers. And even though they're putting these people down, they are so confronted by the truth through their godly lives that they end up glorifying God when he comes.

In other words, they get saved. Isn't that what Yeshua taught? Basic fundamental, Matthew, the fifth chapter. The salt of the earth, the light of the world, city set on a hill can't be hid.

Let your light so shine before men that they will see your good works, your good deeds and glorify your father in heaven. I mean, have we ever seen that? People so confronted by our godly lives, by our good works, by our sacrificial living, by the holiness that comes out of us, that people turn and glorify God. Well, as the body is set right, it has that impact in setting the world right.

And obviously, if we are the standard of righteousness for the world, if we are the standard of righteousness for the world, then what's going to happen is very simple. As we present the law of God to the world, people will become convicted of sin and breaking the law. We've got to bring it.

We can't. We can't look for society to bring it. We've got to bring that revelation of right and wrong as we bring it back.

Conviction will increase and people will know that they've sinned. And when we preach to them about salvation from sin, it'll make more sense. Sure, there's a certain understanding of all human beings of right and wrong.

There's a fundamental law that God's place within people. But when the people of this world are not confronted with the godly witness of the people of God, people just go around sinning with total impunity. Let me just read something that I wrote to you in terms of I didn't write it to you.

I'm going to read it to you. I wrote it. If you read if you read it, then I wrote it to you.

But I just want to show you where we stand and what God needs to do right now at this very moment. There are more believers living here in the United States than at any time in history. Hundreds of churches, both memberships in the thousands and dozens of ministries claim to be touching the world.

Gospel radio and television shows are at 24 hours a day and Christian literature pours off the presses at an unprecedented pace. Believers are neck deep in praise tapes and teaching materials. But something is terribly wrong.

Our society is crumbling all around. This fear of God has all but disappeared. The world sins with total impunity and the people of God say we're blessed.

Something horrible has taken place. The church has backslidden without even knowing it. Like Sardis, we have become the perfect model of an inoffensive Christianity, having a reputation of being alive, yet being dead.

Like Sardis, we have so come to terms with our pagan environment that we provoke almost no opposition and make virtually no impact. And like Sardis, situated high on a mountain rock, we have felt safe and secure in this world. Why else has persecution ceased? How else do we explain the fact that Americans can sin so much with so little guilt unless we have ceased to be the salt of the earth in the light of the world, unless we have ceased to be the standard of righteousness for our society? Paul taught that where there is no law, there is no transgression.

Do the people of the world know that they are breaking God's law when we have not lived it out and proclaimed it? Can we accuse them of irreverence when we have given them nothing to revere? The fact is we have gotten so fat that we can't even get out the church doors to touch the world. Our contemporary gospel has bred complacency instead of compassion, success instead of sacrifice, prestige instead of prayer. We no longer ask what we can do for him, but rather what he can do for us.

Don't you see the incredible carnality of it all? Well, I could go on, but you get the picture. What we need is revival. In other words, revival is the cure.

It'll set things right, make Jesus central again, restore the fullness of God to us, cause us to live a biblical lifestyle in light of eternity and have a tremendous effect in this world in terms of setting things right, setting things straight and seeing God manifest in our midst. Father, we thank you for your coming, for your coming in power, for your manifestation. We pray that you would manifest yourself in our lives first and then manifest yourself in the body.

In Jesus' name, amen.

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